

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. through 18. (canceled)
19. (currently amended) A method for refreshing an image, the method comprising:
  - (a) capturing an image with a camera;
  - (b) sending the image to a user's computer system;
  - (c) refreshing the image, the step of refreshing the image comprising:
    - (i) capturing a refreshed image with the camera, and
    - (ii) sending the refreshed image to the user's computer system, wherein at least a portion of the step of refreshing the image is performed when a refresh period has elapsed;
  - (d) determining whether to increase the refresh period, wherein the step of determining whether to increase the refresh period comprises determining ~~at least one of~~:
    - (i) whether the image is visually obstructed on the user's computer system, wherein the act of determining whether the image is visually obstructed on the user's computer system comprises determining whether the image is covered by a window, or
    - (ii) ~~whether the user has provided any input into the user's system; and~~
  - (e) increasing the refresh period in response to determining ~~at least one of~~:
    - (i) ~~that the image is visually obstructed on the user's computer system, or~~

(ii) ~~that a first period of time has elapsed since the user last provided any input into the user's system.~~

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of increasing the refresh period comprises increasing the refresh period along an exponential curve.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein at least a portion of the step of refreshing the image is no longer performed after a second period of time has elapsed.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of determining whether to increase the refresh period is performed periodically.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the period for determining whether to increase the refresh period is greater than the refresh period.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of determining whether to increase the refresh period is performed when the refresh period has elapsed.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of determining whether to increase the refresh period is performed when a timer reaches a preset value.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of determining whether to increase the refresh period is performed when a counter reaches a preset value.

27. through 29. (canceled)

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising permitting the user to change the refresh period.

31. (currently amended) An apparatus to refresh an image, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a network connection, wherein the network connection is operable for communicating images from a camera to a user's computer system;
- (b) a refresh logic configured to refresh an image captured by the camera upon lapse of a refresh period, the refresh logic being configured to refresh an image by sending a refreshed image to the user's computer system via the network connection;
- (c) a refresh rate logic in communication with the refresh logic, wherein the refresh rate logic is configured to determine whether the refresh period should be changed, the refresh rate logic being further configured to change the refresh period in response to a determination that the refresh period should be increased, wherein the refresh rate logic is in communication with an activity monitor configured to monitor activity of the user, wherein the refresh rate logic is configured to determine whether the refresh period should be changed based at least in part on one or more communications from the activity monitor, wherein the activity monitor is configured to monitor ~~at least one of~~:
  - (i) ~~whether the image is visually obstructed on the user's computer system, or~~
  - (ii) ~~whether a first period of time has elapsed since the user last provided any input into the user's system.~~

32. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the refresh period is set to infinity after a certain period of time has elapsed

33. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the refresh rate logic is configured to communicate with the refresh logic periodically.

34. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the refresh rate logic is configured to periodically determine whether the refresh period should be changed.

35. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the activity monitor is configured to determine at least one of:

- (i) whether a window displaying the image is visually obstructed by another window, or
- (ii) ~~whether a screen saver has been activated on the user's system.~~

36. (currently amended) A method for refreshing an image, the method comprising:

- (a) capturing an image with a camera;
- (b) sending the image to a user's computer system;
- (c) refreshing the image, the step of refreshing the image comprising:
  - (i) capturing a refreshed image with the camera, and
  - (ii) sending the refreshed image to the user,  
wherein at least a portion of the step of refreshing the image is performed when a refresh period has elapsed;
- (d) determining whether to increase the refresh period, wherein the step of determining whether to increase the refresh period comprises determining whether the ~~user has interacted with the user's system~~image is visually obstructed on the user's computer system; and
- (e) increasing the refresh period in response to determining that the ~~user has not interacted with the user's system for a certain period of time~~image is visually obstructed on the user's computer system.

37. (canceled)

38. (canceled)

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 36, further comprising  
(f) counting the number of times the step of refreshing the image has  
been performed; and  
(g) increasing the refresh period when the step of refreshing the image  
has been performed a certain number of times.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising  
visually indicating to the user that refreshing has stopped, wherein the act of visually  
indicating is performed after the second period of time has elapsed.